

Beauty and the Beast

Night of Beauty

WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY

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BASED ON THE TV SERIES CREATED BY

RON KOSLOW

FIRST
PUBLISHING



Wendy Pini



Beauty and the Beast: Night of Beauty

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Rainier Maria Rilke, "Requiem for a friend," from *The Selected Poems of Rainier Maria Rilke* (bilingual edition, 1989), translated and edited by Steven Mitchell. Reprinted by permission of the publisher, Vintage International Books, a division of Random House, Inc., New York, New York.

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Published by First Publishing, Inc.
435 N. LaSalle St., Chicago, Illinois 60610

ISBN: 0-915419-75-0

First printing: March 1990

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

Printed in the United States of America.

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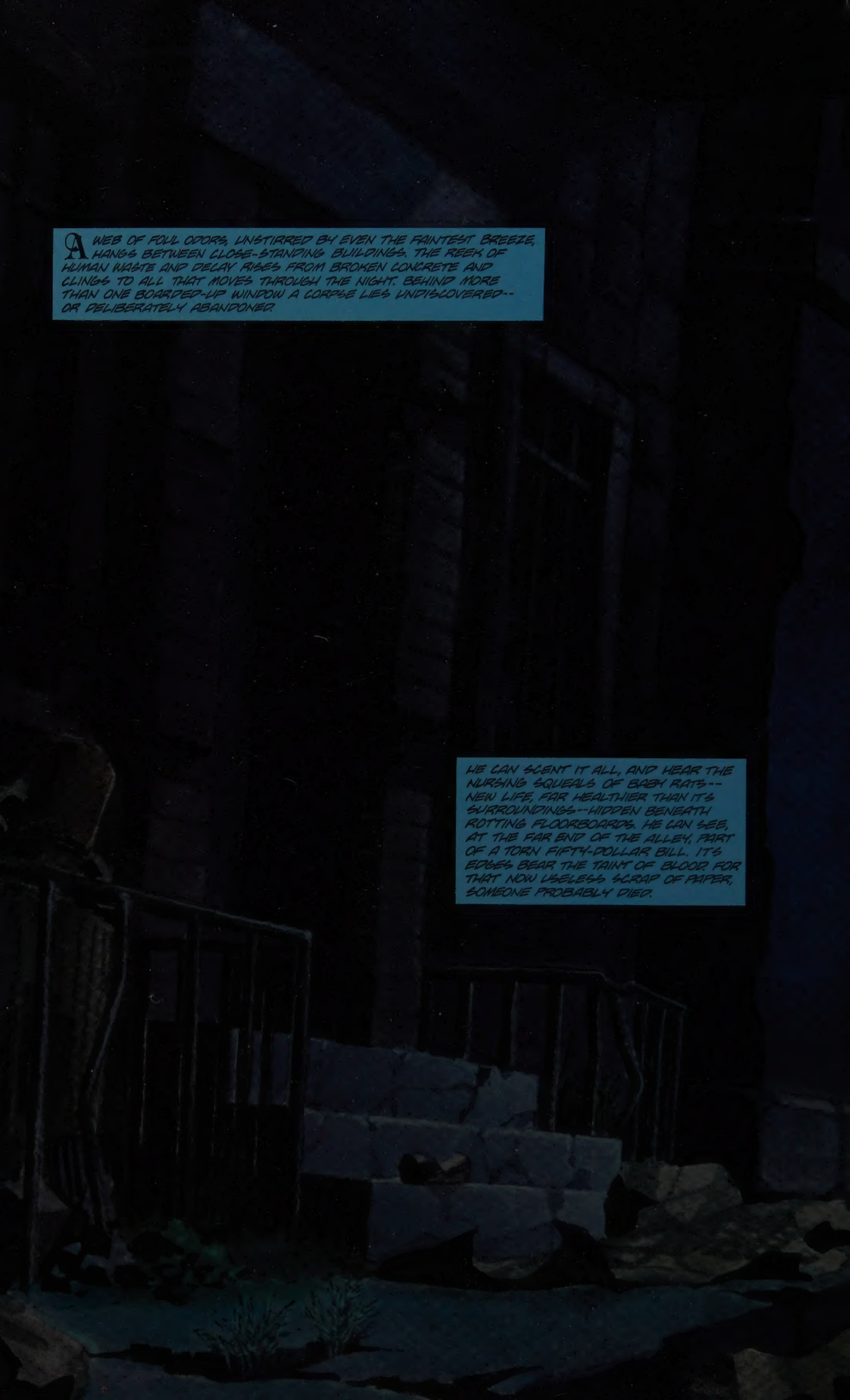
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A dramatic illustration featuring a lion-man with long, flowing golden-brown hair and a human face with a lion's nose and mouth. He is wearing a dark, high-collared coat over a white shirt. He holds a woman in a voluminous, shimmering golden gown. The woman has long, dark hair and is wearing a necklace and a bracelet. She is looking towards the viewer with a slight smile. The background is a deep red with a white diagonal stripe. The text "Once upon a time..." is written in a stylized, blue, cursive font across the middle of the image. The lion-man's shadow is cast on the wall behind him. The woman's shadow is cast on the wall behind her. The golden gown has a long train that pools on the floor, decorated with small red roses. The overall style is reminiscent of classic Disney animation or pulp magazine illustrations.

Once
upon a time...



A WEB OF FOUL ODORS, UNSTIRRED BY EVEN THE FAINTEST BREEZE, HANGS BETWEEN CLOSE-STANDING BUILDINGS. THE REEK OF HUMAN WASTE AND DECAY RISES FROM BROKEN CONCRETE AND CLINGS TO ALL THAT MOVES THROUGH THE NIGHT. BEHIND MORE THAN ONE BOARDED-UP WINDOW A CORPSE LIES UNDISCOVERED-- OR DELIBERATELY ABANDONED.

HE CAN SCENT IT ALL, AND HEAR THE NURSING SQUEALS OF BASH RATS-- NEW LIFE, FAR HEALTHIER THAN ITS SURROUNDINGS--HIDDEN BENEATH ROTTING FLOORBOARDS. HE CAN SEE, AT THE FAR END OF THE ALLEY, PART OF A TORN FIFTY-DOLLAR BILL. ITS EDGES BEAR THE TAINT OF BLOOD FOR THAT NOW USELESS SCRAP OF PAPER, SOMEONE PROBABLY DIED.



FOR EQUALLY INSANE
REASONS, SOMEONE
DID DIE--

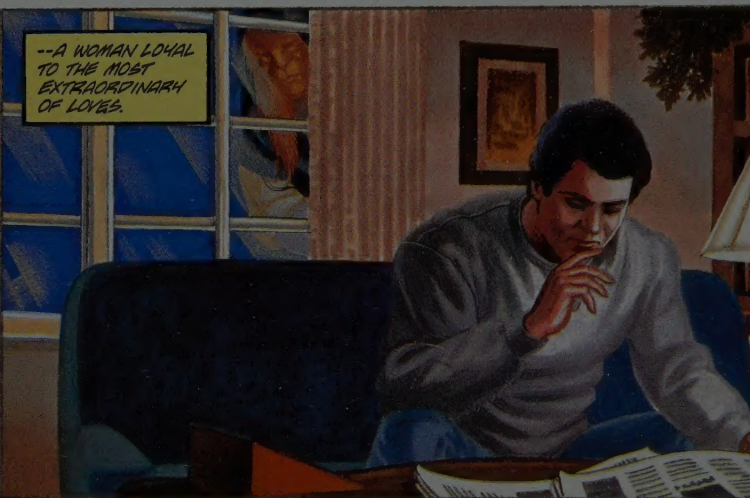
--JUST ONE WEEK AGO.



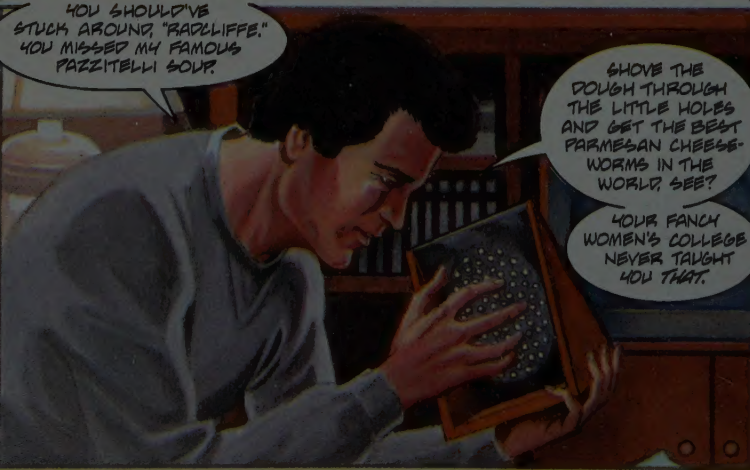
SHE WAS A WOMAN OF GREAT COURAGE WHO LEARNED TO EMBRACE THE UNKNOWN AND GROW FROM THE ENCOUNTER--



--A WOMAN OF STRENGTH AND COMPASSION, WHO TRIED TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE--



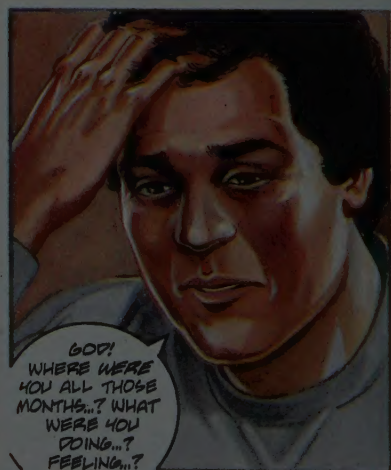
--A WOMAN LOYAL TO THE MOST EXTRAORDINARY OF LOVES.



YOU SHOULD'VE STUCK AROUND "RADCLIFFE." YOU MISSED MY FAMOUS PIZZITELLI SOUP.

SHOVE THE DOUGH THROUGH THE LITTLE HOLES AND GET THE BEST PARMESAN CHEESE-WORMS IN THE WORLD, SEE?

YOUR FANCY WOMEN'S COLLEGE NEVER TAUGHT YOU THAT.



GOD! WHERE WERE YOU ALL THOSE MONTHS...? WHAT WERE YOU DOING...? FEELING...?

DAMMIT!
WHOSE BABY
DID YOU HAVE?
THERE WAS A GUY...
I KNOW THERE
WAS A GUY YOU'D
NEVER TALK
ABOUT...



WAS IT
ELLIOT BLURCH...?
OR SOMEONE
EVEN DEEPER
INSIDE THE
MACHINE THAT'S
CHEWING THIS
TOWN UP?

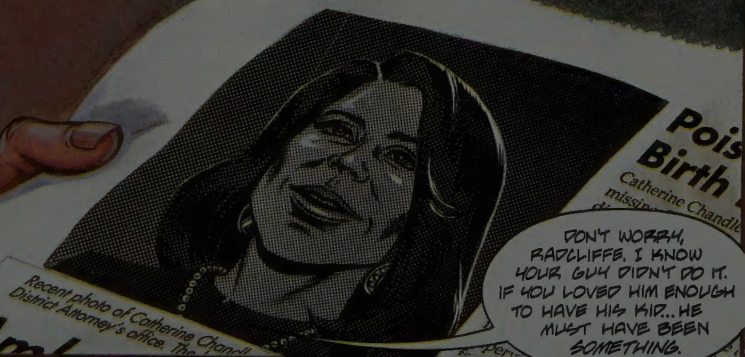


DID YOU
FIND OUT TOO
MUCH, CATHY?
DID THIS GUY
TURN ON YOU
AND--

FRAIN!
THEY'LL PAY!
I'LL GET 'EM
AND MAKE
'EM PAY!



YEAH...I MISS THAT LAUGH. SOUNDED
LIKE POPCORN POPPING. AND THOSE EYES...
CHANGED EXPRESSION A HUNDRED TIMES A
SECOND 'CAUSE OF ALL YOUR SECRETS.
DIDN'T THINK I NOTICED,
DID YOU?



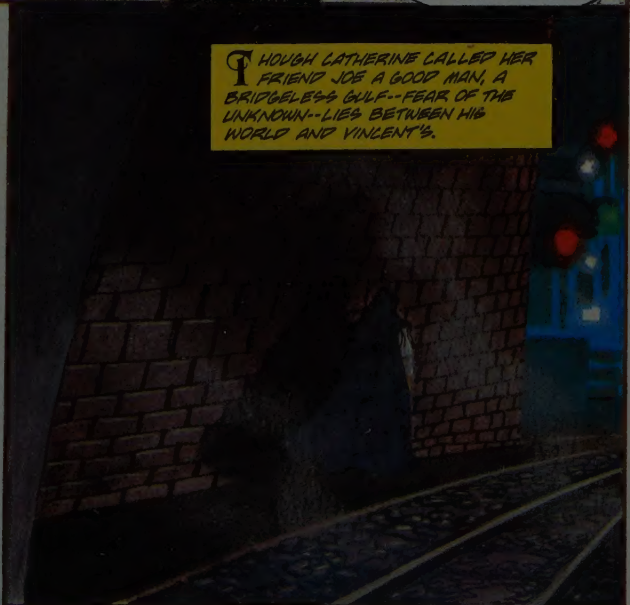
DON'T WORRY,
RADCLIFFE, I KNOW
YOUR GUY DIDN'T DO IT.
IF YOU LOVED HIM ENOUGH
TO HAVE HIS KID...HE
MUST HAVE BEEN
SOMETHING.

DEPUTY DISTRICT
ATTORNEY JOE
MAXWELL STARES
INTO SPACE AS HIS
COFFEE BROWNS
COOL. FOR A MAD
MOMENT, VINCENT
IS TEMPTED TO
REVEAL HIMSELF.



BUT IT
CANNOT
BE.

THOUGH CATHERINE CALLED HER
FRIEND JOE A GOOD MAN, A
BRIDGELESS GULF--FEAR OF THE
UNKNOWN--LIES BETWEEN HIS
WORLD AND VINCENT'S.



SHARED GRIEF IS NOT ENOUGH TO BRING SUCH STRANGERS TOGETHER-- NOT IN A WORLD WHERE MEN STRIVE TO KILL THE DIVINE SPARK IN THEMSELVES, AND REFUSE TO SEE IT IN OTHERS.



HEY!
MY PURSE!

GIMME THAT,
JERK, OR YOU'LL BE
SORRY! GOOD AND
SORRY!

HA HA HAH!
WHADDAYA GONNA DO?
CALL A COP?



HEY,
WATCH IT--!

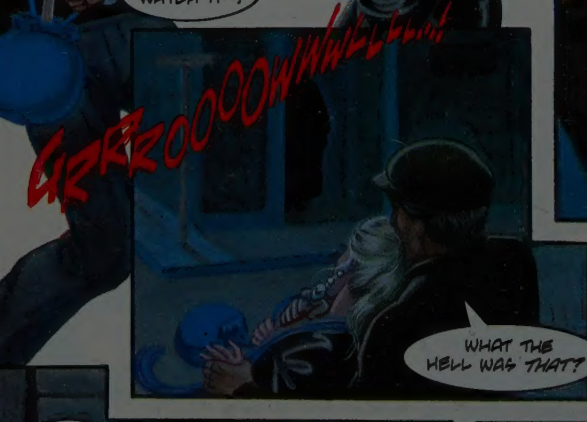


I DON'T LIKE THAT. I
DON'T LIKE YOU! YOU'RE NOT
WORTH YOUR RATE.

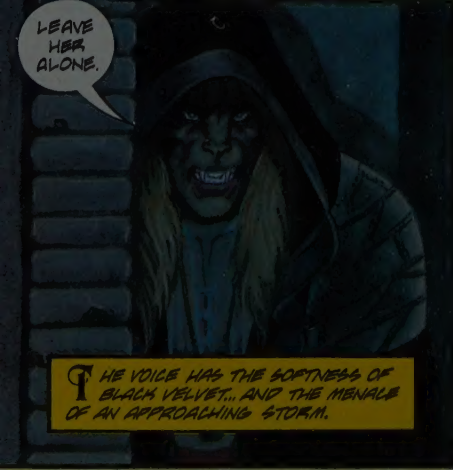
I'M
JUST FINE!
YOU'RE THE
ONE WITH THE
PROBLEM--

OOOOWWWW!!

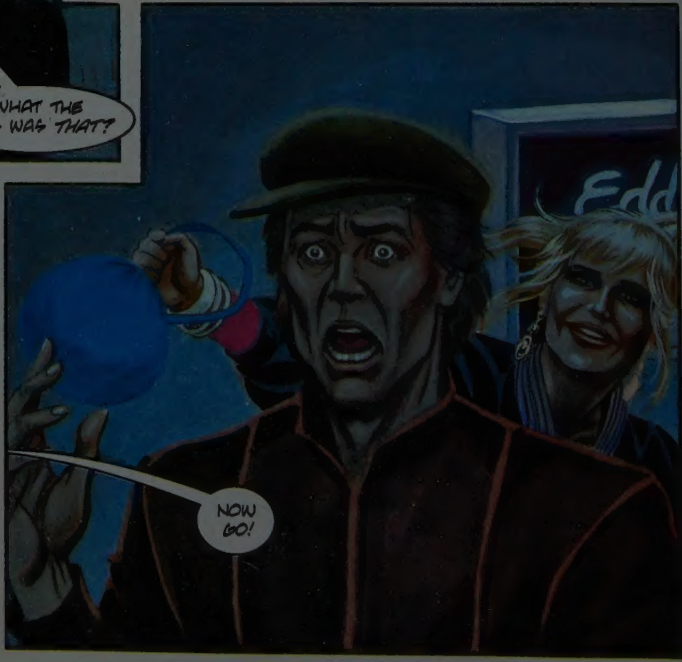
KNOW WHAT "GUP"
MEANS? IT'S YOU ALL OVER! LET'S SEE
HOW YOU LIKE A SQUIRT OF MACE
IN THE EYES, GUP!



WHAT THE
HELL WAS THAT?



LEAVE
HER
ALONE.



NOW
GO!

THE VOICE WAS THE SOFTNESS OF
BLACK VELVET... AND THE MENACE
OF AN APPROACHING STORM.



Hi...

HELLO,
LUCY. ARE
YOU ALL
RIGHT?



ME? OH, S-SURE!
OCCUPATIONAL
HAZARD THANKS
FOR HELPING.

I
WONDERED
IF I'D EVER SEE
YOU AGAIN--IT'S
BEEN A COUPLE
OF YEARS.
GUESS YOU
MADE IT HOME
OKAY.

THANKS
TO YOU.



YOU WERE
A STRANGER--BUT
YOU RISKED EVERYTHING
TO BE MY EYES. YOU
HELPED ME ESCAPE
THOSE WHO WISHED
MY DEATH.

WELL, YOU
CAN BET IT'S NO
SAFER OUT HERE
NOW THAN IT WAS
THEN. YOU GOTTA
GET OFF THE
STREET.

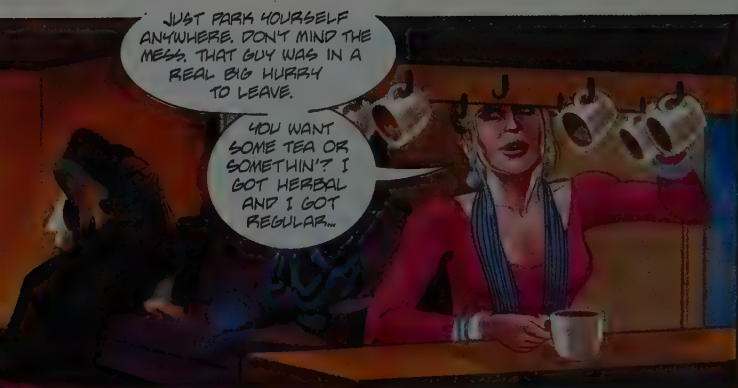
I-I GOT
A NEW PLACE
RIGHT AROUND
THE CORNER.
C'MON.



THIS IS SOME KINDA
RECORD FOR ME, YOU KNOW?
ONLY MY THIRD MOVE SINCE
THAT NIGHT YOU--WELL,
NEVER MIND.




HERE
WE ARE.



JUST PARK YOURSELF
ANYWHERE. DON'T MIND THE
MESS THAT GUY WAS IN A
REAL BIG HURRY
TO LEAVE.


YOU WANT
SOME TEA OR
SOMETHIN'? I
GOT HERBAL
AND I GOT
REGULAR...




GASP ALL THAT PAIN...!
IT'S STILL THERE IN YOUR EYES,
LIKE I REMEMBER. IS THERE
ANYTHING I CAN--?

NO.
FORGIVE ME.
IT'S BEST I
GO.

PLEASE...!
TELL ME.




THE WALL SUDDENLY CRUMBLES.
HELPLESS, HE MUST SPEAK.



I WAS... TOO
LATE. I COULDN'T
SAVE HER! SHE WAS
EVERYTHING! WE ALL
BUT SHARED ONE SOUL
BETWEEN US. HER PAIN,
HER JOY WERE MINE--
I KNEW HER!


WHEN THE
WORLD SAID WE
HAD NO RIGHT-- THAT
OUR LOVE COULD NOT
BE-- WE FOUGHT TO
KEEP OUR DREAM
ALIVE.

BUT THE WORLD WON--
CRUSHED HER WITH ITS CORRUPTION
AND GREED. IT HAS A FACE, THAT EVIL...
ONE MAN'S FACE. I SAW HIM AS HE FLED.
HE CAST HER DYING BODY AWAY LIKE
SO MUCH TRASH!




I-I
COULDN'T
EVEN BE THERE
WHEN THEY LAID
HER IN THE EARTH.
THEY HAD TO
TELL ME HOW
IT WAS.

Oh,
God...!




WE HAD A SON--CAN YOU IMAGINE?!



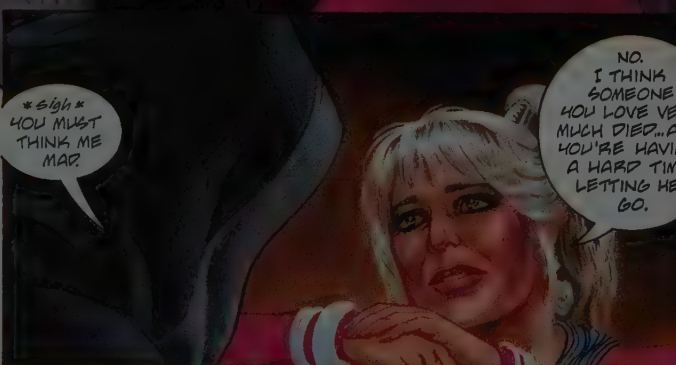
OH, HONEY, OF COURSE I CAN! WITH THAT MUCH LOVE AROUND HIM, ANY KID'D BE LUCKY TO--

--I'VE NEVER SEEN HIM!
HER CAPTORS STOLE HIM FROM HIS MOTHER AS SOON AS SHE BORE HIM. HE'S ALL THIS WORLD HAS LEFT ME... OF HER. I MUST FIND HIM!




YET SOMETHING ELSE REMAINS... UNFINISHED. BETWEEN US. SHE HAUNTS ME. SHE'S NOT AT PEACE, I KNOW... DON'T ASK ME HOW...

sigh
YOU MUST THINK ME MAD




NO. I THINK SOMEONE YOU LOVE VERY MUCH DIED... AND YOU'RE HAVING A HARD TIME LETTING HER GO.



BELIEVE IT OR NOT, I HAD ALMOST TWO YEARS OF COLLEGE. BACK WHEN IT WAS ALL BEARS AND BELL BOTTOMS AND EVERYONE WAS ON SOME KIND OF HEAD-TRIP.

I DID SOME READING. WEIRD STUFF!

SOMEHOW IT WAS MORE LIKE... LIKE REMEMBERING, YOU KNOW?



LOOK... MAYBE YOU'RE HANGING ON SO HARD... THAT SHE CAN'T GO WHEREVER SHE'S SUPPOSED TO GO NOW.

MAYBE SHE'S KIND OF... YOU KNOW... WAITING.





THANK YOU, LUCY. YOU'RE TRULY WISE.

THIS LIFE MAKES YOU FORGET A LOT. I DIDN'T KNOW JUST HOW MUCH I'D FORGOTTEN... 'TIL I MET YOU!

YOU'RE A RAINBOW, YOU KNOW?



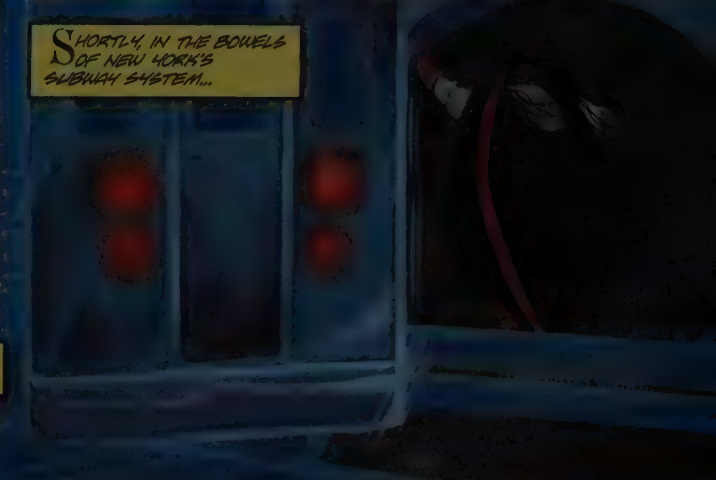
THE KIND YOU SEE OUT OF THE CORNER OF YOUR EYE... ON A WALL OR IN A WINDOW. YOU DON'T HAVE TO KNOW WHERE THE COLORS COME FROM. THEY'RE JUST THERE, LIKE MAGIC, MAKING EVERYTHING LOOK NEW.

I NOTICE THINGS LIKE THAT NOW... BECAUSE OF YOU.

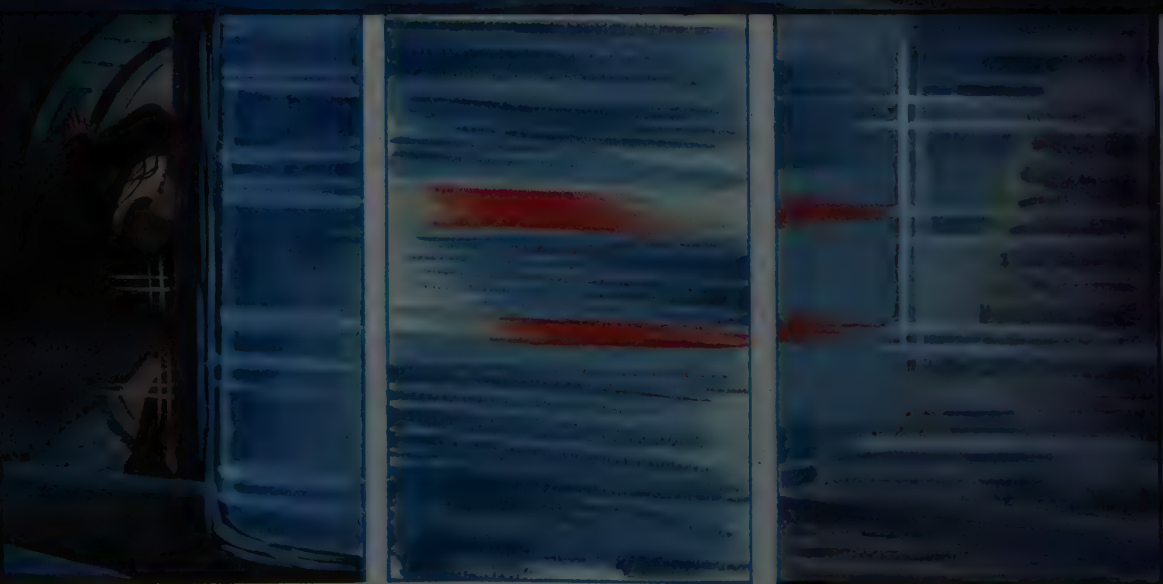


YOU CHANGED THE WAY I SEE.

HE CLOSED THE DOOR, LEAVING HER THE GIFT OF A FAINT SMILE--HIS FIRST IN DAYS.



SHORTLY, IN THE BOWELS OF NEW YORK'S SUBWAY SYSTEM...



A SOMBER ATMOSPHERE PERVADES VINCENT'S SECRET UNDERGROUND HOME. HIS FRIENDS, GLAD OF HIS RETURN, MEET HIS GAZE... THEN QUICKLY LOWER THEIR EYES.



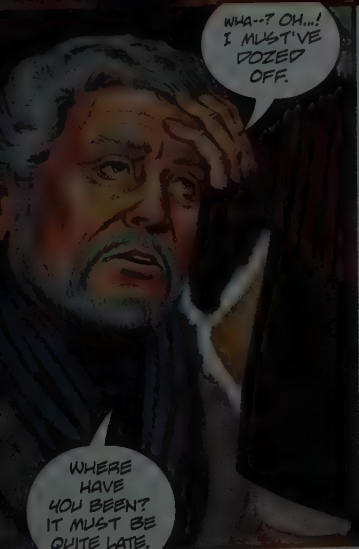
EACH OF THEM VALUED CATHERINE IN HIS OR HER OWN WAY. BUT THEIR COLLECTIVE SORROWS ARE OVERSHADOWED BY VINCENT'S TOWERING LOSS. WHAT WORDS CAN THEY OFFER?



WHAT VOICE CAN HE HEAR--



--EXCEPT
HERE?



WHA--? OH...!
I MUST'VE
DOZED
OFF.

WHERE
HAVE
YOU BEEN?
IT MUST BE
QUITE LATE.



YOU SHOULDN'T
WAIT UP FOR ME, FATHER--
NOT ANY MORE.

Sigh
VINCENT, I KNOW
THAT WHAT CALLS YOU
ABOVE--THE CHILD--IS
FAR MORE COMPELLING
THAN ANY TIES YOU
HAVE HERE.

BUT
NEVER FORGET
THIS IS YOUR
HOME... YOUR
FAMILY. WE WILL
ALWAYS BE HERE
FOR YOU.



ONCE
I BELIEVED
IN
"ALWAYS"



SO DID CATHERINE.
DID YOU KNOW SHE LEFT A
GREAT SUM OF MONEY IN TRUST
TO PETER ALCOTT? IT'S FOR
THE HELPERS...AND FOR US
...IN TIMES OF NEED

SHE WANTED
OUR WORLD, AND
MOST ESPECIALLY
YOU, TO BE SAFE
AND SECURE--
ALWAYS.

VINCENT...?



YOU TAKE.
CHOKES SHOULD
BELONG TO YOU
NOW.

MOUSE!
THESE ARE THE
TOOLS CATHERINE
GAVE YOU.



SHINY...NEW...FIRST
NEW THINGS MOUSE EVER
GOT. CAN FIX ANYTHING
WITH THEM.



THEY WERE
MADE TO WORK
WONDERS--BUT
ONLY IN THE
HANDS OF A
MASTER.

KEEP
THEM, MOUSE.
CATHERINE
MEANT THEM
FOR YOU.

MISS
HER...
LOVED
HER...!

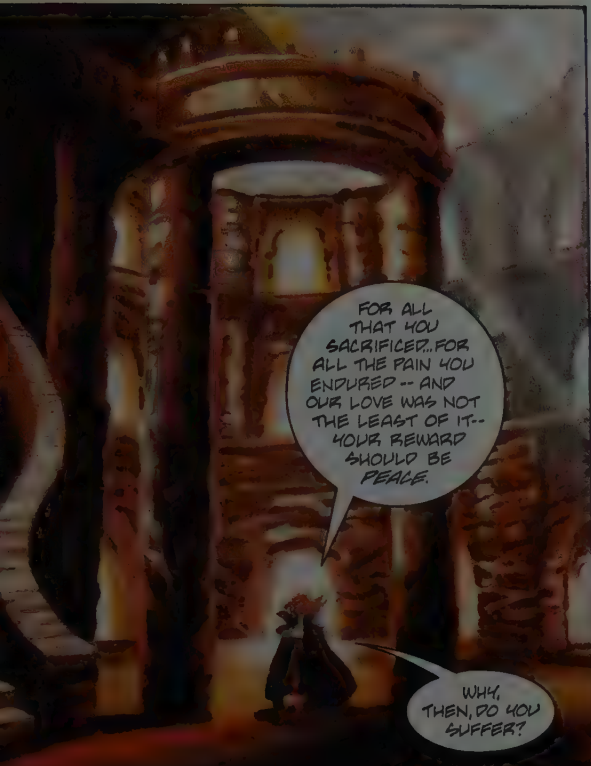
I
KNOW.



VINCENT!?

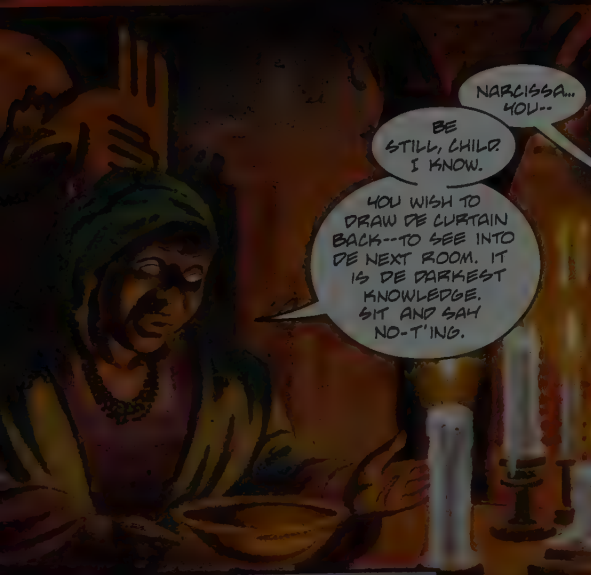
NO.
LET HIM
GO.

THINGS HAVE
CHANGED FOR HIM,
AND FOR US. I'M
AFRAID WE MUST
ALL BEGIN...TO
LET HIM GO.



FOR ALL THAT YOU SACRIFICED... FOR ALL THE PAIN YOU ENDURED -- AND OUR LOVE WAS NOT THE LEAST OF IT-- YOUR REWARD SHOULD BE PEACE.

WHY, THEN, DO YOU SUFFER?



NARCISSA... YOU--

BE STILL, CHILD I KNOW.

YOU WISH TO DRAW DE CURTAIN BACK-- TO SEE INTO DE NEXT ROOM. IT IS DE DARKEST KNOWLEDGE. SIT AND SAY NO-T'ING.



CATHERINE! WHAT IS LEFT FOR US TO DO, YOU AND I? TELL ME!

SAVE FOR THE ETERNAL SOUGHING OF THE CAVE OF WINDS, NO ANSWER COMES.

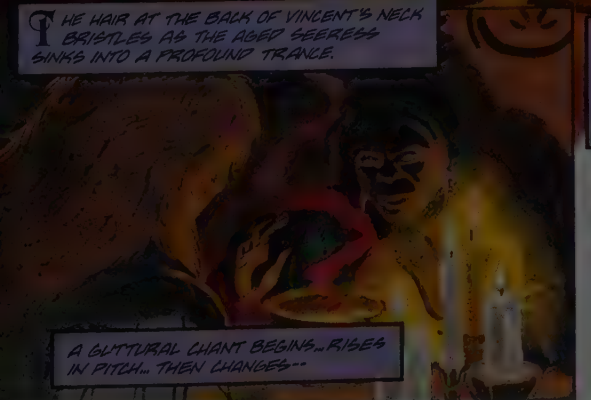


ENTER, VEENCENT. WHAT YOU SEEK, MAY BE FOUND HERE.

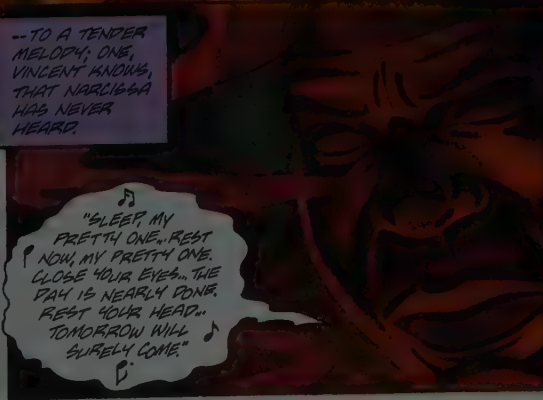
COME, LAY YOUR HANDS ON DE TABLE.



THE HAIR AT THE BACK OF VINCENT'S NECK BRISTLES AS THE AGED SEERESS SINKS INTO A PROFOUND TRANCE.



A GUTTURAL CHANT BEGINS... RISES IN PITCH... THEN CHANGES--



--TO A TENDER MELODY; ONE, VINCENT KNOWS, THAT NARCISSA HAS NEVER HEARD.

"SLEEP MY PRETTY ONE... REST NOW, MY PRETTY ONE. CLOSE YOUR EYES... THE PAH IS NEARLY DONE. REST YOUR HEAD... TOMORROW WILL SURELY COME."

THE SONG
FADES
AWAY...

SUCH PASSION...
SUCH NEED! FEELS
SO STRANGE VISITING DE
HEART OF A FORGETFUL
OLD WOMAN.

THAT WAS
CATHERINE'S
LULLABE!
AND YOUR
VOICE--!

VINCENT ACCEPTS ALL THAT HE HEARS
FOR, MORE THAN ONCE, HE HAS "DIED"
AND GLIMPSED THE LIGHT HIMSELF.

IT'S AS IF OUR
SHORT TIME TOGETHER
WAS ONLY BORROWED...OR
PERHAPS STOLEN.

WE MET IN THE WAKE
OF VIOLENCE, AND FACED
DEATH AGAIN AND AGAIN FOR
EACH OTHER'S SAKE. WE
ALWAYS WALKED A NARROW
PATH BETWEEN THIS WORLD
AND THE NEXT.

--HUSH! I AM
NOT FINISHED! SHE
MUST ENTER DE LIGHT
ALONE. T'INK WELL
ON DIS.

MAKE
NO MISTAKE,
YOU WILL
WANT TO
STAY WIT'
HER.

AND IF
YOU DO...PFFFT!
YOUR LIFE HERE
IS DONE.

LISTEN WELL, CHILD. YOUR
CAT'RINE IS STILL TIED TO YOU.
HER BONDS ARE MADE OF DIS
WORLD'S KIND OF LOVE.

DE LIGHT
SHINES...NO!
SHE WILL NOT
GO IN.

HER
GUIDES COME...NO!
SHE WILL NOT FOLLOW
DEM INTO DE LIGHT.
SHE IS IN DANGER OF
BECOMING LOST!

YOU ARE STILL HERE
FOR A REASON. BUT THERE
IS ONLY ONE GUIDE CAT'RINE
WILL FOLLOW NOW. HAVE YOU
DE STRENGTH TO LEAD
HER TO DE LIGHT--

--YES--!

BUT IF
YOU ARE STRONG
ENOUGH TO
RETURN WIT'OUT
HER--

"-IT WILL BE DE GREATEST
SACRIFICE...DE GREATEST
ACT OF LOVE!"

FAR BEYOND THE
PERIMETERS OF THE
INHABITED TUNNELS, WHERE
FEW UNDERGROUNDERS ARE
WILLING TO MAKE THE DARK
AND LONELY JOURNEY, LIES
THE CRYSTAL CAVERN.

THOSE ABLE TO BRAVE THE
HARD DESCENT ARE
REWARDED WITH A SIGHT
UNEQUALLED IN ALL THE WORLD.

TO THIS ETHEREAL PLACE NARCISSA
HAS SENT VINCENT. HE HAS BEEN
HERE BEFORE, ON MISSIONS THAT
HAVE BEEN FAR HAPPIER--AND FAR
LESS HAZARDOUS.


VINCENT PREPARES HIMSELF ACCORDING TO NARCISSA'S INSTRUCTIONS. THREE GIFTS SHE HAS GIVEN HIM; THE FIRST TWO ARE WARNINGS...

"REMEMBER, VEENCENT... YOU WILL MEET CAT'RIANE ON HER PATH, NOT HOURS. LET YOUR LOVE GUIDE HER, BUT KNOW YOU CANNOT SPARE HER DE TRIALS TO COME. ALL SHE DOES MUST BE OF HER OWN WILL.

"DO NOT FORGET ALWAYS TO MOVE TOWARD DE BRIGHTER LIGHT. IT WILL NOT FAIL YOU. IT WILL NOT FAIL HER, IF SHE CHOOSES IT."

THE THIRD GIFT SMELLS OF EARTH, FIRE, AIR, AND WATER--OF DEEP SECRETS WAITING TO REVEAL THEMSELVES TO ONE WHOSE COURAGE AND NEED ARE GREAT ENOUGH...

ANYTHING...
ANYTHING... FOR
YOU...!



A THUNDEROUS RINGING SURROUNDS HIM, FILLS HIM--THE SOUND OF SPECTRAL LIGHT. DAZZLED AT FIRST, AND MORE TERRIFIED THAN HE EXPECTED, HE SLIDES FROM ONE RADIANT SHARD OF COLOR TO THE NEXT.


CATHERINE...

CATHERINE...

RINN... WNN...!

HIS WILL PROPELS HIM. THERE IS NO OTHER MEANS OF MOVEMENT HE THINKS OF HIS LOVE AND ONLY HER...

...AND SO LEAVES HIS FEAR BEHIND.



THIS, THEN, IS HER PATH, HER CREATION.
BUT HE IS A PART OF IT THE COMFORTING
SHADOW OF THIS DREAM VEILED THEIR
GLARING PHYSICAL DIFFERENCES, HELD THEM
BOTH IN ITS DUSKY EMBRACE AS SHE READ
HIM POETRY BY CANDLELIGHT.

HE RECOGNIZES THIS HAVEN AT
ONCE. IT IS THE PLACE WHERE HE
AND HIS CATHERINE ARE ONE.



"SLEEP, MY
PRETTY ONE... REST ♪.
NOW, MY PRETTY
ONE..." ♪



CATHERINE...!?

"--CLOSE YOUR
EYES... THE PAY IS NEARLY
DONE-- ♪



HE TRIES TO RUN, TO FOLLOW
THE PLAINIVE VOICE--BUT
HERE, THERE ARE NO EARTHLY
LAWS FOR HIS LIMBS TO OBEY.



"--REST YOUR
HEAD... TOMORROW
WILL SURELY
COME..." ♪

CATHERINE!!

HERE, THE
LAW OF
MOVEMENT
IS NOT
EFFORT, BUT
DESIRE...



WARMTH... AND GOLDEN LIGHT. NOT REFLECTED--RATHER, LIGHT THAT IS LIFE...ILLUMINATION FROM WITHIN... A PIERCINGLY CLEAR, UNEARTHLY LIGHT... AND YET--

--HE CAN TOUCH HER. HIS GREAT PAW CARESSES EACH TINY FINGER BONE AND JOINT. HE CHERISHES THE FAMILIAR, ALWAYS-SURPRISING STRENGTH OF THOSE SMALL HANDS AS THEY ENCIRCLE HIS WAIST.

SO BEAUTIFUL...!

EYES... SHINING! FACE... SO SOFT... LIKE A ROSE PETAL...

EVERY ACT, EVERY EXPRESSION OF LOVE BECOMES PART OF A TIMELESS SYMPHONY. MOVEMENT FLOWS INTO MOVEMENT; SHAPES AND SHAPES OF ECSTASY EMERGE WITHOUT OVERTURE, SUBSIDE WITHOUT FINALE. THIS COULD BE "ALWAYS."

B
L
T

VINCENT...?

WE MUST GO FROM HERE!





VINCENT!

CATHERINE!
WAIT!

YOU
WON'T LOSE ME!
WAIT--!

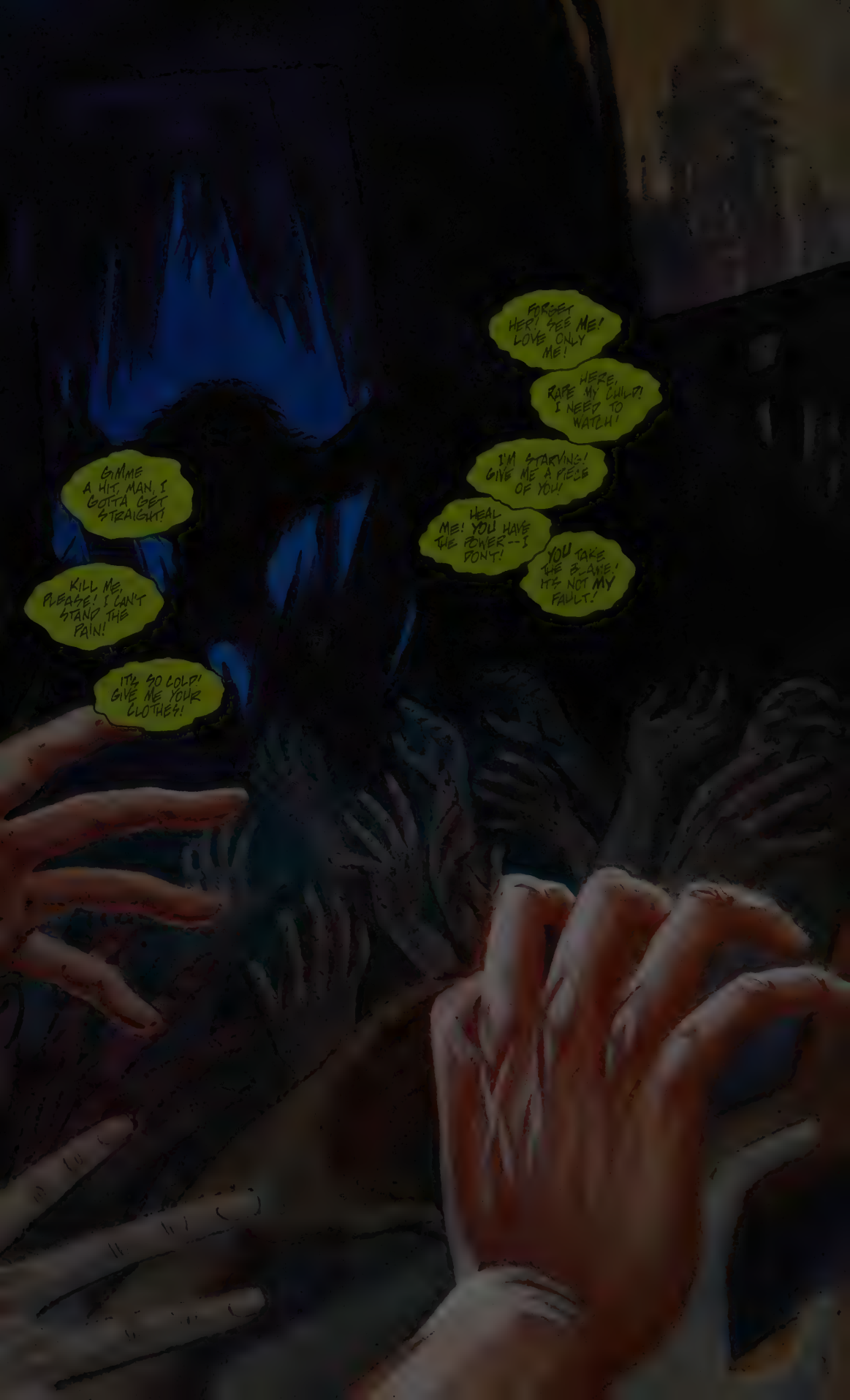
--PLEASE!
LET ME HELP!

UHH!!

NO!

"REMEMBER VEENCENT...
YOU CANNOT SPARE HER...
DE TRIALS TO COME...!
...TRIALS TO COME...
...TRIALS TO COME..."





FORGET
HER! SEE ME!
LOVE ONLY
ME!

HERE,
RAPE MY CHILD!
I NEED TO
WATCH!

I'M STARVING!
GIVE ME A PIECE
OF YOU!

HEAL
ME! YOU HAVE
THE POWER--I
DON'T!

YOU TAKE
THE BLAME!
IT'S NOT MY
FAULT!

GIMME
A HIT, MAN, I
GOTTA GET
STRAIGHT!

KILL ME,
PLEASE! I CAN'T
STAND THE
PAIN!

IT'S SO COLD!
GIVE ME YOUR
CLOTHES!





TOO MANY...
sob ALWAYS
TOO MANY..!

CATHERINE!
LET IT GO!

YOU CANT
FIX IT ALL! NO
ONE CAN!

YOU GAVE
SO MUCH OF
YOURSELF...TOUCHED
SO MANY LIVES!
PLEASE KNOW--



--JUST
KNOW...YOU MADE A
DIFFERENCE!



sigh ITS
ALL RIGHT, I'M
REALLY.. REALLY..
ALL RIGHT.

COULD YOU
EVER HAVE ACCEPTED
ME--LOVED ME AS I AM--
IF YOU WERENT FAR
MORE THAN THAT?

SEE YOURSELF
AS I...AS EVERYONE
WHO LOVES YOU SEES
YOU. THAT IS WHO
YOU ARE.

GASP
LOOK!

THIS
WAY...TOWARD
THE BRIGHTER
LIGHT.

NO!
IT WILL
SEPARATE
US!

DON'T
BE AFRAID!
CHOOSE THE
LIGHT!

FOLLOW
ME! I'LL KEEP US
TOGETHER!

CATHERINE!
I BEG YOU--!

NOTHING
WILL PART US
AGAIN!



OH
GOD!



No!

FIGHT!
FOR GOD'S SAKE,
FIGHT!!!

FOR YOUR
SAKE... I MUST NOT!
YOU MUST SEE...
THERE'S NO
TRUTH--

--IN
ANY OF
THIS!



LEAVE HIM ALONE!

LEAVE HIM ALONE OR I'LL KILL YOU--

--KILL YOU--

--KILL YOU!!!

NO, CATHERINE! NOT FOR ME! STOP!!!

STOP!!!



LISTEN TO ME!
HERE IS WHERE YOU
LEARN IT, NOW OR
NEVER! WE'RE
SAFE!

NO
MATTER HOW
THE WORLD HURT
US...FORCED US TO
FIGHT BACK...WE
WERE ALWAYS
SAFE!

NO ONE--
NOTHING--CAN
DESTROY US!

CATHERINE...
MY STRONG...MY
BEAUTIFUL
AVENGER...CHOOSE
LOVE!

I'VE BEEN...
SO ANGRY! THEY
TOOK IT ALL AWAY
FROM ME!
CHOKES

THERE
WAS SO MUCH
I WANTED
TO DO...!

TO KEEP THAT
ANGER ALIVE...EVEN HERE!
HOW IT MUST HAVE
HURT YOU!

ALL
THOSE
MONTHS WITHOUT
YOU BY MY
SIDE...

THE CHILD
CAME--THEN,
SUDDENLY...IT
WAS OVER!

WHAT WE
SHARED WAS
ENOUGH...
MORE THAN
ENOUGH!

IT
WAS!

IT IS!
LOVING YOU IS...
EVERYTHING.



GASP THE
BASEMENT--WERE
HOME!

VINCENT...
I-I DON'T
REMEMBER
THAT
PASSAGE-
WAY!



NO...
OH NO...NOT
YET!

IT'S...
TIME YOU'RE
READY.

IT'S
TOO BRIGHT!
THIS WAY IS
EASIER.

CATHERINE...
PLEASE!

AT LAST...
SHE KNOWS.

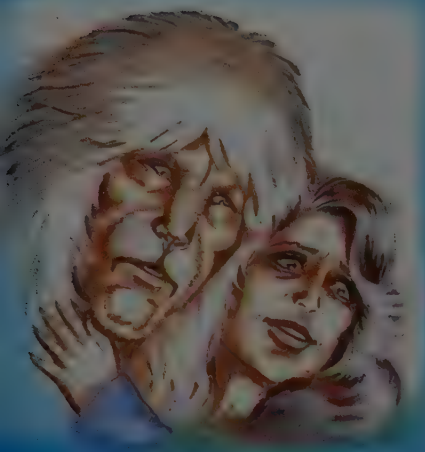
DEAR
GOD, I'VE BEEN...
TESTING MYSELF!
AND YOU--YOU'VE
SHARED IT WITH ME--
GONE THROUGH IT
ALL...FOR
ME!

IT'S
IMPOSSIBLE! I
I CAN'T...

TAKE
ME WITH YOU!
WHATEVER PATH
YOU CHOOSE--I
CHOOSE! OH,
CATHERINE--

I DIDN'T
KNOW... NEVER
DREAMED... THIS
WOULD BE SO
HARD!

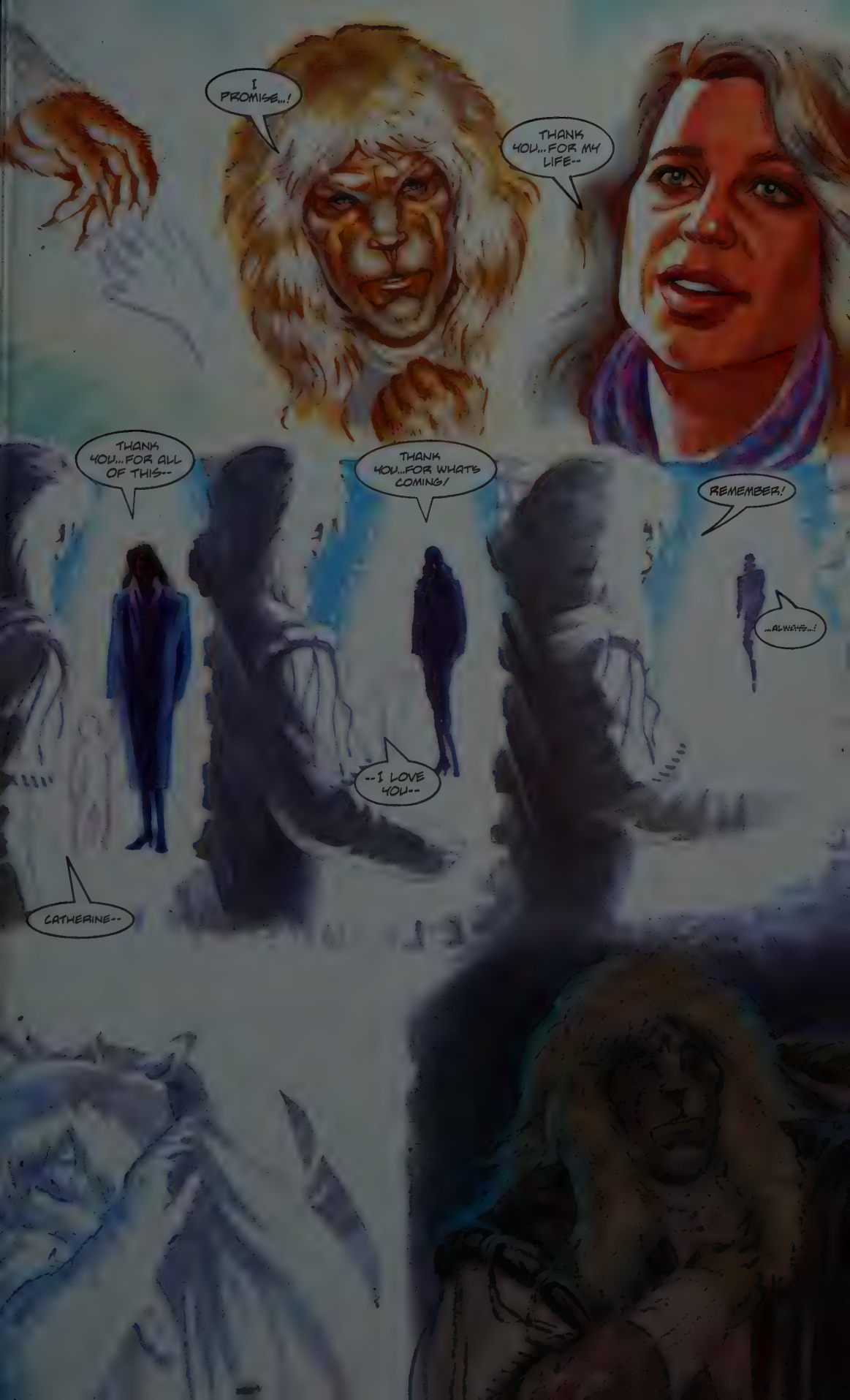




WE CREATED
IT ALL--EVERY STEP
OF THE JOURNEY--
FOR EACH OTHER,
VINCENT.

WHAT
WE CREATED
TOGETHER... OUR
SON... MUST
LIVE!





I
PROMISE...!

THANK
YOU... FOR MY
LIFE--

THANK
YOU... FOR ALL
OF THIS--

THANK
YOU... FOR WHAT'S
COMING!

REMEMBER!

...ALWAYS!

--I LOVE
YOU--

CATHERINE--

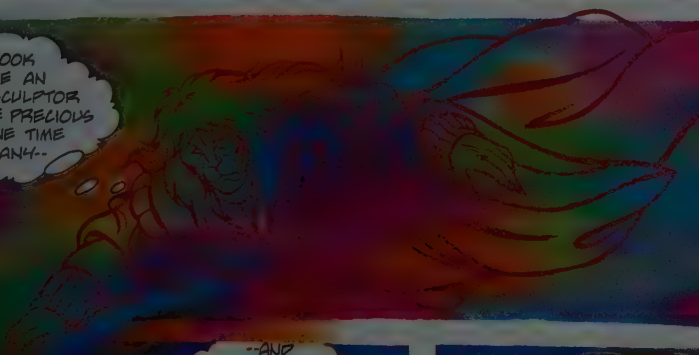
IT'S
DARK, IF
ANY PART OF
YOU IS STILL
HERE WITH
ME--



--STAY BY
MY SIDE, JUST
LONG ENOUGH SO
THAT I DON'T
STUMBLE.



IF I LOOK
BACK, LIKE AN
UNCERTAIN SCULPTOR,
I'LL TAP THE PRECIOUS
MARBLE ONE TIME
TOO MANY--

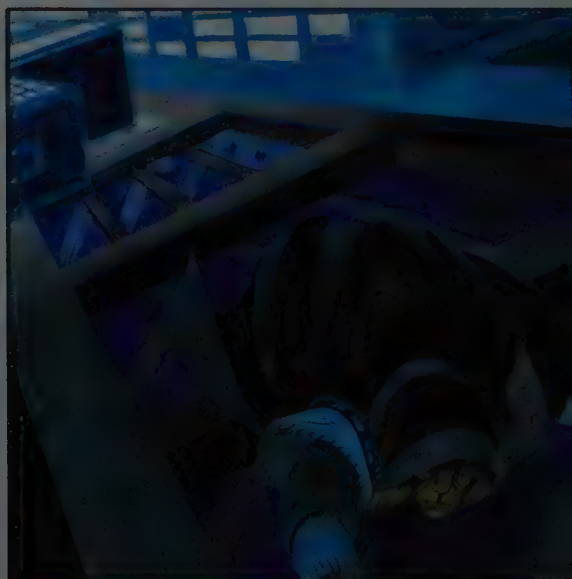
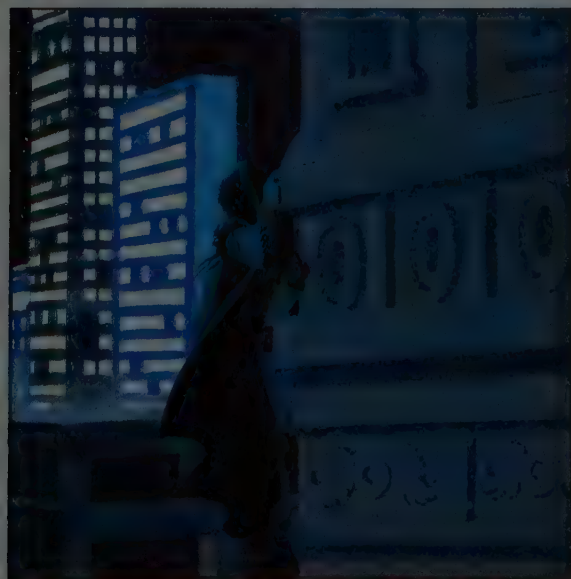



--AND
SHATTER
WHAT IS PERFECT
AND COMPLETE
BETWEEN
US.



CATHERINE...
I BELIEVE... IN
ALWAYS.





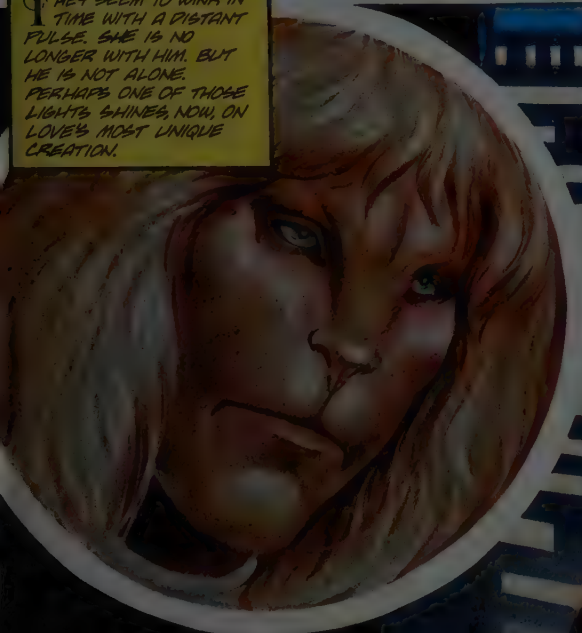


A CLEANSING WIND BORN OF THE RIVER AND ITS MOTHER BAY SWEEPS ALONG THE ROOFTOPS. HIGH ABOVE THE CITY, THE AIR IS NOT SO BURDENED WITH THE SCENT OF A MILLION HORRORS, A MILLION SORROWS.


IT IS SIMPLY THE AIR.

THERE IS AN ORDERLINESS, ASTONISHING TO CONSIDER, IN THE GLITTERING PATTERN OF TRAFFIC BELOW. FROM THIS PERSPECTIVE, EVERYTHING SEEMS TO MAKE SENSE.

BUT THE MYRIAD EYES, THE LIGHTS THAT HAVE ALWAYS ANSWERED HIS GAZE FROM THE FACES OF LONG-KNOWN TOWERS, ARE DIFFERENT TONIGHT.



THEY SEEM TO WINK IN TIME WITH A DISTANT PULSE. SHE IS NO LONGER WITH HIM. BUT HE IS NOT ALONE. PERHAPS ONE OF THOSE LIGHTS SHINES NOW, ON LOVE'S MOST UNIQUE CREATION.



SOFTLY...HE BEGINS TO HUM CATHERINE'S LULLABY.

SOMEWHERE, HE IS CERTAIN, THE CHILD HEARS.



*"For this is wrong, if anything is wrong:
not to enlarge the freedom of a love
with all the inner freedom one can summon.
We need, in love, to practice only this:
letting each other go."*

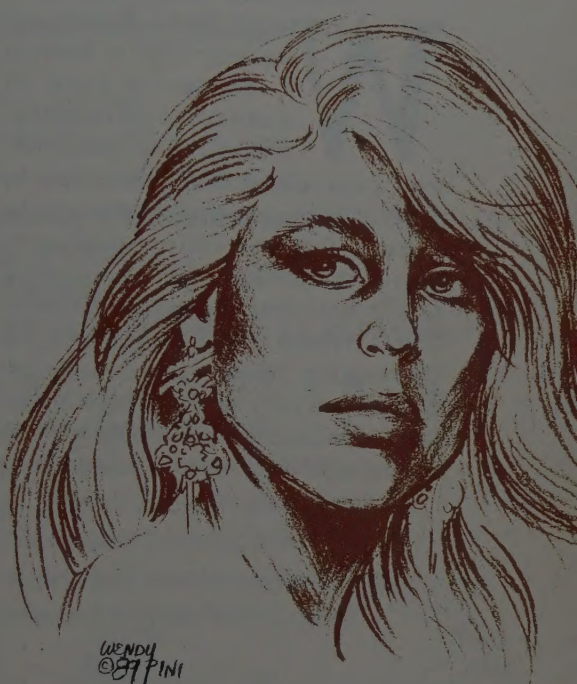
*—Rainier Maria Rilke,
'Requiem for a Friend'*

"So, how do you feel about doing this book?" Ron Koslow looked at me from his side of a long conference table littered with pastry crumbs, dented soda cans, pieces of half-eaten fruit, and balls of crumpled notepaper. The *Beauty and the Beast* writers had just finished a marathon story session.

"Well, it's certainly a privilege to work so closely with the Catherine and Vincent characters," I answered, "but I do feel a bit intimidated. After all, this story is about their last — their *very* last — meeting." Ron laughed. "Nothing like being under pressure, is there?"

The story treatment I'd submitted earlier for the second B&B graphic novel, a standard Beast'n'robbers thing, had received a lukewarm response. But then I got "the phone call" during which Ron Koslow explained in detail what would happen in the show's third season. "You mean the Beast is going to lose his beauty?!" I squeaked. What a curve ball! What a loss! Linda Hamilton's creation — brave, adorable, expressive, size-two Cathy — gone! How would, indeed how *could*, Vincent survive? Just how far would his love for Catherine take him?

Night of Beauty is my answer. The story was inspired by Cocteau's classic *Beauty and the Beast* film, by Rilke's poem "Requiem for a Friend," and in no small part by a beautiful, lovingly conceived book entitled *Letters to a Dying Friend*, by Anton Grosz. Astonishing Anton, a long-time acquaintance of Richard's and mine, has done a great service by presenting the Tibetan Book of the Dead in terms that the Western mind can grasp.



When depicting the afterlife, it's easy for a fantasy artist to resort to clichés. But with these three great sources of imagery as reference, I felt a bit more equal to the task before me.

Upon acceptance of the script for *Night of Beauty*, Ron Koslow expressed the wish that it could be made into a two-hour movie. "Can't we scrape a few million dollars together?" I wheedled. Ron laughed again: "It would take considerably more than a few million!"

Well, that's the advantage of the graphic novel medium. Your special effects budget is as unlimited as your imagination. For all the faithful followers of the most extraordinary, romantic fantasy series ever to appear on television, may your imaginations always be as boundless as your god-given ability to love.

— Wendy Pini

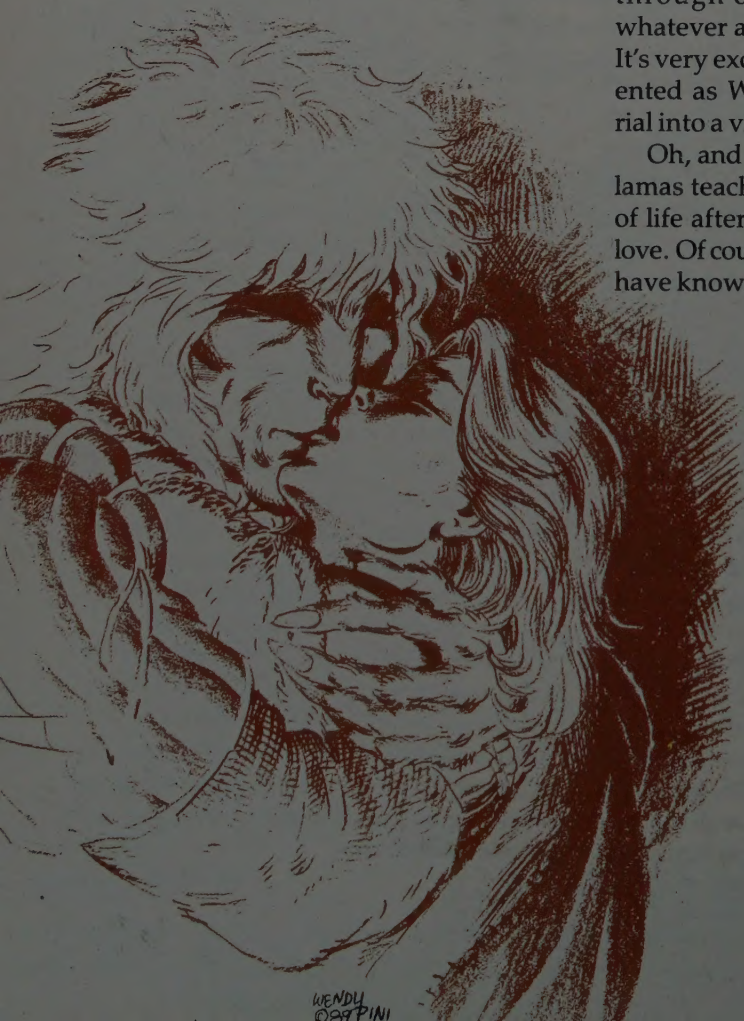
Wendy Pini's *Beauty and the Beast: Night of Beauty* is a very special work. In addition to its imaginative storyline, deep-running emotion, and vibrant artwork, *Night of Beauty* is one of the first works I've seen that draws on mystical teachings of the Bardo — the non-physical reality that exists beyond the life of the body. Written down more than 1,200 years ago by Tibetan lamas, this information has only recently been translated into English and brought to the attention of the Western world. Even

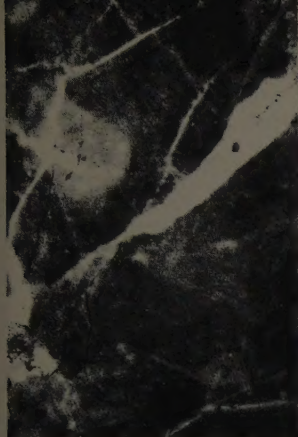
more exciting, the mystical experiences originally described so long ago are being confirmed by people who've been resuscitated from death by medical science.

I do not consider the Bardo to be fictional. Each of us, upon dying, will experience our deepest thoughts and emotions, much the same as we experience them in our dreams. And just as in our dreams, what we go through will seem absolutely real, as anyone who's ever had a nightmare can attest. Manifestations of our personal ideas and feelings, in the form of beings, colored lights, or other visions, will lead us through our own unique maze to whatever awaits us on the other side. It's very exciting to see someone as talented as Wendy translate that material into a visually oriented medium.

Oh, and what do the ancient Tibetan lamas teach as the most basic essence of life after death? *Love*. Pure, simple love. Of course, *Beauty and the Beast* fans have known this all along.

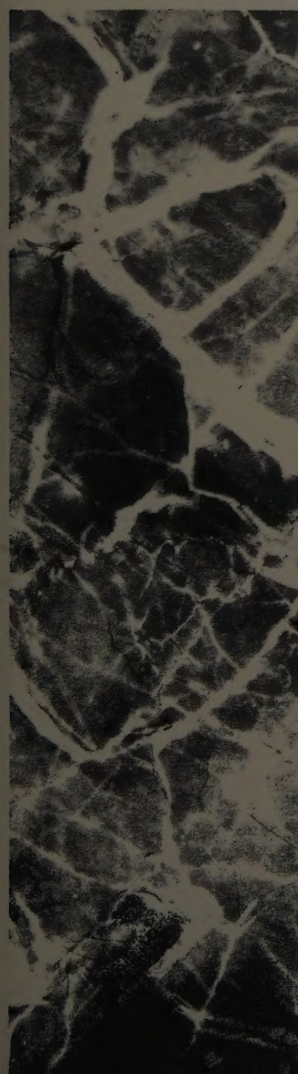
— Anton Grosz





O T H E R
F I N E
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Night of Beauty

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